

on July 23, 1982 I asked the Government to table any documents they might have comparing the rate of subsidies given to grain farmers in the U.S. with those in Canada. Some time later I received a reply saying that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is not aware of the existence of the documents requested. The implications of that were somewhat startling. Either the Government was lying—and I am not going to accuse the Minister of Agriculture of lying—or the Government does not have those figures. In other words, the Government is making this major assault on the economy of western Canada without even an inkling as to what the effects are going to be on our international trade. The U.S., of course, subsidize their grain farmers in several ways. A major part of their grain is barged down the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, a system maintained by the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers. That is a subsidy to American grain farmers.

Canadian grain farmers face many of the obstacles their American counterparts in North Dakota and Montana must face. There are tremendous distances to the shipping ports. The American system allows for assistance to grain farmers in shipping their grain, yet the only assistance the Canadian grain farmers get is an indirect subsidy called the Crow. To kick that support out from underneath the western grain farmer is an act of total irresponsibility. But then, what can you expect from a Government which has rattled the basis of Canadian Confederation ever since it returned to office in 1980? The assault on western Canada through the Constitution and various resource policies is inexcusable. That assault continues with this legislation, which in turn comes from a Government with hardly any representation in western Canada among the people who will be so greatly and adversely affected.

**Mr. Pepin:** That does not prevent you from passing judgment on Quebec.

**Mr. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat concerned and puzzled at the type of opposition that Members to my right have raised. To tell you the truth, it is very confusing. We hear many different arguments being introduced. Of course, the Conservative Party has a variety of interests that it must maintain. They get support from the commodity groups, and of course we all know that they would like to see this legislation go through. The Conservatives have some debts they must honour to the coal and lumber interests, and so on.

**Mr. Pepin:** I thought you said everyone disagreed with it?

**Mr. de Jong:** One of the various conflicting interests the Conservatives feel they must represent is that between the grain producers and cattlemen. Not all but many cattlemen feel this is essentially good legislation and that the statutory rates must be changed. Many of them feel this would help them and would bring processing plants to western Canada. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would dearly like to see processing plants move to western Canada; after all, a lot of our beef is produced there. But I am not convinced that doing away with the

### *Western Grain Transportation Act*

statutory Crow rate is going to result in more processing plants and better beef production in western Canada.

**Mr. Malone:** Why not?

**Mr. de Jong:** I will tell you why. Last Spring, Mr. Speaker, I took a week off from my duties in this House and paid an extensive visit to North Dakota and Montana. I talked to elevator operators, grain farmers and the Commissioner of Agriculture in the State of North Dakota. I talked to all sorts of people involved in the agriculture sector of those two States. What did they tell me? I told them that in North Dakota and Montana they do not have a statutory rate. We have the Crow but they do not. Did they feel that this had benefited them in terms of beef production and processing plants? They said no, they do not have any processing plants in North Dakota. They have one in Montana and one flour mill in North Dakota which has been supported by subsidies from the State, but there were no tremendous benefits to the beef producers in those two States. There were no flour mills to speak of because the economics are still that it is cheaper to ship the cattle on the hoof than it is to ship it as finished products in refrigerated cars.

**Mr. Althouse:** Because the producer is paying for it.

**Mr. de Jong:** That unfortunately is the harsh economic situation. For the Government to attempt to seduce western beef producers into supporting the Crow changes against their brothers who are producing grain is, I think, one of the more despicable attempts at seduction by the Government.

**Mr. Blais:** Oh, don't be silly.

**Mr. de Jong:** I am afraid that many of my Conservative colleagues to the right have fallen for that seduction from across the way.

I would like to see some honest studies, Mr. Speaker, that would show how much more beef production there is going to be in western Canada, how many more packing plants there will be if this legislation goes through. If the experience in North Dakota and Montana is any indication, there will be very minimal benefits to the beef producers in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Pepin:** Then you complain you cannot process your goods.

**Mr. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is running out, so therefore—

**Mr. Blais:** In an electoral sense as well.

**Mr. de Jong:** —I will give a preview of my next speech on the Crow. I will attempt to deal with some of the double-talk coming from the Government. We are moving into 1984, which has always struck me because of a novel I read in high school by George Orwell called "1984". In that book there was a term called "double-think" and "double-speaker". The common usage of a word and its meaning was totally turned upside down. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) have called us reactionary on this side. I want to deal with that piece of double-talk at the